

JOE WARDY  
MAYOR



## **CITY COUNCIL**

SUSAN AUSTIN  
DISTRICT NO. 1

ROBERT A. CUSHING, JR.  
DISTRICT NO. 2

JOSE ALEXANDRO LOZANO  
DISTRICT NO. 3

JOHN F. COOK  
DISTRICT NO. 4

DANIEL S. POWER  
DISTRICT NO. 5

PAUL J. ESCOBAR  
DISTRICT NO. 6

VIVIAN ROJAS  
DISTRICT NO. 7

ANTHONY W. COBOS  
DISTRICT NO. 8

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MARCH 22, 2004  
12:00 P.M.**

The City Council met at the above place and date at approximately 1:06 p.m. Mayor Joe Wardy present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Susan Austin, Robert A. Cushing, Jr., Jose Alexandro Lozano, John F. Cook, Daniel S. Power, and Anthony Cobos. Absent: Vivian Rojas. Late arrival: Paul J. Escobar.

### **AGENDA**

1. Discussion and action on the following in connection with the selection of an executive search firm for City Manager:
  - a. Presentations by firms.
  - b. Selection of a firm and direction to City staff to begin negotiations for a contract award.

Mr. Byron Johnson, Director of Purchasing, stated that five executive search firms would be presenting their proposals and that following the presentations; Council Members would evaluate each firm. He provided a list of "Do's and Don'ts" pertaining to the evaluations for the Council Members (on file in the City Clerk's office).

### **CPS Executive Search**

Mr. David Harris, CPS Executive Search, Sacramento, California, gave a Powerpoint presentation and outlined the firm's services (on file in the City Clerk's Office). He answered questions from and responded to comments made by the Council Members.

Representative Cushing questioned how CPS was a government entity and Mr. Harris responded that the firm's status was that of an inter-governmental entity.

Representative Power questioned the firm's fees and target groups and Mr. Harris explained that the base fee was \$30,000 and provided an itemization and noted that additional fees would be incurred in the event that extensive reference checks were necessary.

Mayor Joe Wardy and Representative Escobar questioned the recruiting process for cities with existing City Manager positions as opposed to cities initiating the position. Mayor Wardy questioned the number of additional executive searches conducted simultaneously by CPS.

Mr. Harris explained the differing search processes and noted that CPS would be conducting four to six additional executive searches simultaneously.

Representative Austin requested Mr. Harris provide background information on himself and his staff and questioned how long the firm would remain in El Paso during the search process.

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**The Oldani Group**

Mr. Jerry Oldani, President of The Oldani Group, provided Council Members with a booklet outlining The Oldani Group (on file in the City Clerks Office) and gave background information on the company's recruitments. He answered questions from and responded to comments made by the Council Members.

Representative Cook questioned Mr. Oldani regarding the City of Lubbock recruitment and the number of applicants it produced.

Representative Cushing questioned the number of successful candidates placed by The Oldani Group with populations similar to El Paso's.

Mr. Oldani responded approximately 10 communities had had successful candidate placements with 20 to 30 searches conducted. He outlined the process the firm would utilize to conduct a successful search for the City Manager position.

Mayor Joe Wardy noted that a Community Advisory Committee would assist the firm awarded the contract in their quest for a City Manager and questioned what the cost of the firm's fees were.

Representative Austin questioned the extent of City staff's involvement in the process.

Mr. Oldani responded that the base fee would be \$18,500 not to include out of pocket expenses and other expenses such as advertising, brochure production, video and travel billing. He estimated the out of pocket expenses to be approximately \$13,500.

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**Gerald Plock Associates**

Mr. Gerald Plock, Gerald Plock Associates, provided documents highlighting the firm (on file in the City Clerk's Office) and gave an overview of the Gerald Plock Associates firm. He explained the process the firm would utilize in the search for the City Manager position. He answered questions from and responded to comments made by the Council Members.

Representative Austin questioned the number of cities the firm had recruited for, specifically cities initiating the City Manager form of government, and questioned how well connected to the consortium of City Managers he was.

Mr. Plock responded that the firm had worked with cities of the same population or larger; however, he noted that very few had recently converted to the City Manager form of government. He explained his involvement with the International City Managers Association.

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Motion made by Representative Lozano, seconded by Representative Austin and unanimously carried to recess the Special City Council meeting at 1:56 p.m.

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Motion made by Representative Cook, seconded by Representative Power and unanimously carried to reconvene the Special City Council meeting at 3:02 p.m. Representative Escobar was not present for the vote.

### **The PAR Group**

Mr. Karl Nollenberger, Vice-President, The PAR Group, gave an overview of the firm and provided documents relating to the firm's operations (on file in the City Clerk's Office). He answered questions from and responded to comments made by the Council Members.

Representative Escobar questioned how many city managers recruited by The PAR Group were still in those positions and what qualifications the City of Austin was seeking in their Assistant City Manager position.

Representative Cushing requested Mr. Nollenberger provide a reasonable salary estimate for a City Manager position and questioned the number of years the firm had worked for the City of Fort Worth.

Mr. Nollenberger responded that a salary survey would be required to give a solid answer; but he estimated the salary amount at \$150,000 or higher. He noted that the firm had conducted business with Fort Worth for approximately 10 years.

Representative Austin questioned what the firm's fees and expenses were.

Representative Lozano asked from which sector, the private or public, city managers have been selected.

Mr. Nollenberger noted that the vast majority of appointments had been selected from the public sector, especially for city manager positions in larger cities similar to El Paso.

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### **Mercer Group, Inc.**

Messrs. Jim Mercer, President, and Jim Blagg, Senior Vice President of The Mercer Group, Inc., gave an overview of the firm (on file in the City Clerk's Office) and a Powerpoint presentation. Mr. Blagg provided specific information relevant to previous appointments. They answered questions from and responded to comments made by the Council Members.

Representative Power questioned their knowledge of the El Paso community and what qualifications they would be seeking in their search for a City Manager.

Mr. Blagg responded that an individual with extensive public service experience would best serve the El Paso community.

Representative Austin questioned whether or not the firm had considered the uniqueness of El Paso being a border community. She questioned how recruiting firms learn of city manager vacancies.

Representative Cook questioned if The Mercer Group had been hired by the City of El Paso previously.

Mr. Mercer replied that El Paso's position as a border community would be a factor in recruiting a city manager. He said Mercer Group, Inc. reads newspapers and magazine articles to learn of city manager vacancies in addition to working through city manager organizations and other professional contacts.

Representative Cushing inquired whether or not city manager positions required assistant city manager positions.

The reply was that it was customary for large cities to have both a city manager and one assistant city manager or more.

Mr. Blagg noted that the lead recruiting officer would be himself and added that the firm employed 15 to 20 persons.

Mr. Mercer explained that cities initiating the City Manager form of government, such as El Paso, it was imperative that mistakes in recruitment be avoided. He further explained that, for a city of El Paso's size, the individual(s) possess a proven track record in managing a public sector organization. He explained that due largely to salary considerations, it was rare but not unheard of for a city manager to move into the position from the private sector,

Representative Power commented that Messrs. Mercer and Blagg were previously employed as city managers and was concerned that The Mercer Group would exclude their search specifically to city managers.

Mr. Mercer commented that the firm would not be biased regarding public or private sector employment.


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The Council Members asked questions of Mr. Byron Johnson, Director of Purchasing. Following that, Council Members scored each firm, utilizing the scoring sheets regarding the scoring process (on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Mr. Johnson read the scores into the record and identified The Mercer Group as the highest scoring firm.

Motion made by Representative Cook, seconded by Representative Cobos and carried that the City of El Paso requires services to be performed in the process for management analysis, position analysis, study and recruitment for a City Manager for the City of El Paso, and that the City Council authorizes staff to negotiate, and the City Attorney's office to review and prepare a contract for City Council approval with the Mercer Group, Inc. as the executive search firm for City Manager.

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Motion made by Representative Austin, seconded by Representative Cushing and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting at 4:58 p.m.  
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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

  
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Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk